

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Monday, October 23, 2000

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 23, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD A. PEASE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 2442. An act to provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgment of such injustices by the President.

H.R. 3657. An act to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of public domain land in the San Bernardino National Forest in the State of California, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1854. An act to reform the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976.

S. 2406. An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide permanent authority for entry into the United States of certain religious workers.

S. 2915. An act to make improvements in the operation and administration of the Federal courts, and for other purposes.

S. 2943. An act to authorize additional assistance for international malaria control, and to provide for coordination and consultation in providing assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 with respect to malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

RUSSIAN ARMS SALES TO IRAN

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in both Chambers to press forward in getting to the truth in airing the facts behind the administration's deal with Moscow. I ask my colleagues that sit on the relevant committees to investigate the administration and, of course, the Vice President's role in co-chairing the 1995 meeting with the Russian Prime Minister on the U.S.-Russian Binational Commission.

My colleagues, it is only through newspaper articles recently that we have hints of the administration's turning a blind eye concerning Moscow's arms sales to Iran. The White House has refused to provide a copy of the classified 1995 "aide-memoire" signed by Vice President GORE and Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin that stated the United States would not impose penalties on Moscow as required by U.S. law. The aide-memoire reveals an implicit agreement to ignore U.S. laws governing the U.S. response to arms sales to terrorist nations, including Iran.

Mr. Speaker, the law I am referring to is the Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act that was passed in 1992, which requires sanctions against countries that sell advanced weaponry to countries the State Department classifies as state sponsors of terrorism. It is interesting that then-Senator GORE, along with Senator MCCAIN, authored this law, also known as the Gore-McCain Act. The law is rooted in concerns about Russian sales to Iraq of some of the most sophisticated weapons that the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement explicitly allowed.

In 1995, an agreement signed by Vice President GORE and Russia's Prime Minister Chernomyrdin endorsed Russia's completion of sophisticated and advanced arms deliveries to Iran. The Vice President and the Russian Prime Minister mentioned an arms agreement in general terms at a news conference the day the agreement was signed, but the details have never been disclosed to Congress or the public.

The weapons Russia has committed to supply to Iran include one kilo-classified diesel-powered submarine, 160 T-72 tanks, 600 armored personnel carriers, numerous anti-ship mines, cluster bombs, and a variety of long-range

guided torpedoes and other munitions for the submarine and tanks. Russia agreed to complete the sales by the end of 1999, and not to sell weapons to Iran other than the ones specified. Russia has already provided Iran with fighter aircraft and surface-to-air missiles.

The kilo-class submarine sold to Iran should be of particular concern to Congress and the American public because it can be hard to detect and could pose a threat to oil tankers or American war ships in the Gulf. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, Russia continues to be a significant supplier of conventional arms to Iran despite the Gore-Chernomyrdin deal, the Central Intelligence Agency reported in August.

Those working for the Vice President argue that the arms pact aided the U.S. because the submarine and tanks were not advanced weapons, as defined by the Pentagon; and, thus, the U.S. could not have applied sanctions anyway. However, statements by the White House and the Vice President's office defending the policy of not sanctioning Russia was contradicted by a letter sent to Russia in January by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The letter to Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov states that the United States would have imposed sanctions on Russia for its arms sales if there had been no 1995 agreement. "Without the aide-memoire, Russia's conventional arms sales to Iran would have been subject to sanctions based on various provisions of our laws."

Furthermore, Senator MCCAIN, one of the principal authors of the act said, "Clearly, the 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement was intended to evade sanctions imposed by the legislation written in 1992 by the Vice President and me." Furthermore, he went on to say, "If the administration acquiesced in the sale, then they have violated both the intent and the letter of the law."

Without the explicit act of Congress, the Vice President did not have the power or authority to commit the United States to ignore U.S. law. The Vice President's deal with Moscow gives the Russians not only the green light to violate our Nation's laws but encourages them to do so. The administration has already admitted that Russia has failed to meet its promise to end deliveries by December 1999 to Iran.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in both Chambers to properly investigate, find the truth, and I should say get to the bottom of our relationships with Russia.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.